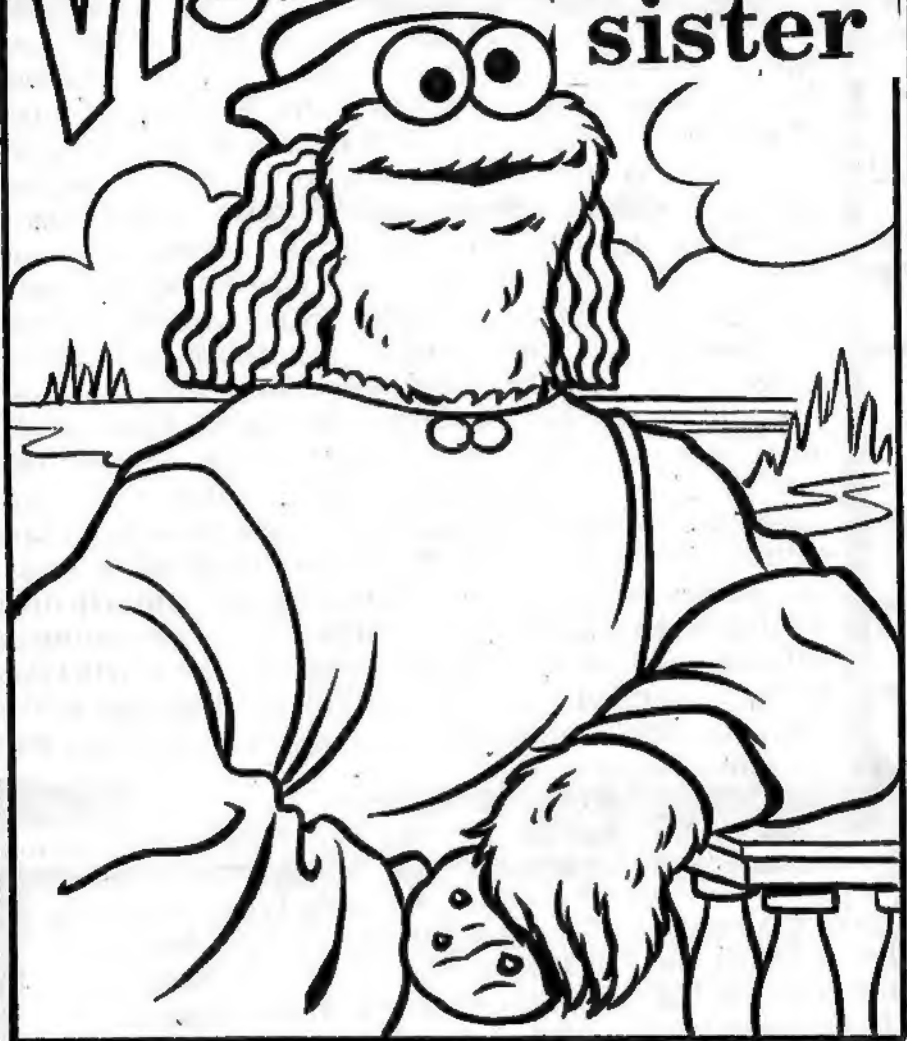


**VISIT** salome's  
sister



THE MUSEUM OF  
MONSTER ART

the femme skunk  
#1

Welcome to "Salome's Sister," the first issue of the Femme Skunk. It aspires to be a quesadilla-- thick gobs of greasy cheese, slices of onion, stinging circles of jalapeño pepper, all wrapped in one tortilla. Probably the biggest thing in this issue is gonna be the thing about skool/kidpower/complications, ~~and the thing about skool/kidpower/complications~~. There's also stuff about impurity and craziness and schoolgirl sexuality. Everything's connected. I also do a zine called Picklejar, with my best fiend and honeybear Hugh, which is artsier by far and bigger and less intensely autobiographical. (And please forgive this zine; I am really not practiced at confessional writing, kids, & the tone here kind of surprised me.) Some promotion: Hugh has just finished his new zine One Mint Julep and I strongly recommend it: stuff about class, exclusion w/in punq scene, zine conspiracy, plus one of the 2 coolest personals ads I've ever read (ooh!); he is also putting together a zine about kidpower and soliciting writing & other stuff. For any of the zines I've mentioned, or for correspondence with this program, write to PO Box 9785, Washington, D.C., 20016. Tell me what you dug or what you didn't like (please!). I guess in a lot of ways this is the ambivalence issue...

all writing © 1996 by eve tushnet

Inspirations-- Dorothy Allison, especially Trash and Skin: Talking About Sex, Class, and Literature; Patti Smith, Trixie Smith, the Smiths; Roy Rogers, El Tamarindo, & Jolt cola; Ani Difranco; John Bellairs; Shakespeare (and the brilliant, crackheaded, *fine* man who talked to me for hours about him); mascara, malt liquor, and my new toy M-16; the smell of spring in the mixture of decaying lilacs & bus exhaust; Lisa Jones, author of Bulletproof Diva: Tales of Race, Sex, and Hair; the Slits; the sun and the moon; the York Castle ice cream parlor on Georgia Ave.; the Nation of Ulysses, the Make\*Up; D.C., Downed City, Domain of Control-board, but not yet Divided and Conquered, honey; and, of course & forever, Hugh McElroy and Nadya Arnaoot. Vi beser dayn libshaft fun vayn.

...This is a revised version of something I wrote 11/11/95.  
1995 was a year of disaster for just about everyone I know.

He's driving with one hand, drinking birch beer with the other, the clouds scudding and stoplights swinging and the windshield cracked with rain. And we're talking about this once-a-friend who raped this friend, and we're talking about the people who have taken off this year, for college or for a crowd of assholes or the Isles of the Blessed, and when I say "romance sucks" we knock our soda cans together. It doesn't have to be eloquent to be true. And a flock of dead leaves spins at the windshield and then up, up, and over the car. Then we're at the thrift store and I slip leopard-print stiletto heels on my feet, playing Vinyl Menace poster girl with my feet stapled together, in shoes I can't afford what with all the cash I owe everybody else. In the ice cream parlor we trade bites and talk punk and race and azaleas over peppermint stick & hot fudge. Sparkling silver antennae bobble over my head. "Ah, but are you an alien with a mark on your forehead?"

Layoffs and car accidents and corpses and disease; we laugh tired & bruised & say, "This must be our holiday in the sun." C'mon, you're boring me, what's next??

"I only took the regular course."

"What was that?" inquired Alice.

"Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with," the Mock Turtle replied, "and then the different branches of Arithmetic-- Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision."

-Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland

All the kids I know jounced through school like silver balls along the tabletop of a pinball machine. Noises, colored lights flashing, hurtling from one bumper to another and knocking against the walls. We sashayed down the hallways looking for love in all the wrong places. We slunk to the back of the room and pulled out zines to read in calculus class. We reeled and writhed. So this is about school and how we got around it and how we got through it; how we messed up ourselves & each other; how we changed some things and had some fun; it's about resistance, control & complications.

**ambition.** Alexander R. Shepherd Elementary School, five blocks from my house at 16th and Kalmia, was named after a staunch segregationist and was about 97% black in the early '80s. I was one of the 3%. We travelled in packs. We traded rumors about the first grade teacher who made kids stand in trash cans, the science teacher who only gave A's to her daughter. Kids tried to shut up and look solemn under the cafeteria-monitor eye of the computer teacher who threatened to punish you if you even looked like you were thinking about talking. For our punishment we stood in a line outside the computer room, slouched against the wall when she wasn't looking, tossed bored glances up at the printout banner that read, "Shoot for the moon and even if you miss, you'll be among the stars!" I almost got kicked out of my fourth grade class; the teacher favored the kids who beat up & hassled me and my friends, and then gave us weird shit that made no sense. Stand up-- sit down-- I told you to stand up! We gave her like a nervous breakdown or something; it was her first and last year teaching. I transferred for the last quarter of the year and got Ms. Novella Nesbitt, who took us on walks and taught us Greek mythology. One recess she went out on the playground and jumped double dutch in her red high heels. I was so crushed on her... I stopped hanging out with a lot of my friends then, and picked up a new gang from Ms. Nesbitt's class. We played Butt Tag in the sandbox and trained cicadas during the time of the 17-year locusts. I guess the solidarity that we'd built up fighting the evil teacher ended up keeping us apart once I became The One

PSSST... OVER HERE!

That Got Away. Temper tantrums were the only way I knew to react, & in this case it worked...

**distraction.** Slogans don't explain anything about my life. Kids spread rumors that I picked my butt 'cause once I picked a wedgie not knowing that this was, like, disgusting. When I went back to the playground in high school some kid still remembered (don't ask me how) and said did I have a sister who picked her butt? One day when we were standing in an uneven line at the end of recess Ramon walked up to me, no words, and punched me in the stomach, for reasons that I understood perfectly though I couldn't have explained it to you if you'd asked. Once, all my friends got mad at me when I made fun of a girl for being fat. I got teased for being skinny, & had my mom always obsessing that I was *clinically underweight*. I believed that skinny=ugly, so much so that once or twice, by a convoluted process of logic, I've not eaten in order to make myself uglier, so my outside would match my inside.

the point: I was  
& am as  
stupid as  
anyone  
else

Not easy to explain.

**uglification.** I switched schools in 5th grade. My mom remembers me as being really unhappy at Shepherd, and blossoming at GDS; I remember loving my old school except for a few rotten teachers and mean kids, and spending my first half-year at GDS with no friends and a terrible teacher. I mouthed off a lot; I also made a bow&arrow from a protractor, a rubber band, and a paper clip. Hit her right on the butt and didn't get caught. We were using that fucked-up curriculum where you study seagulls, baboons, and Eskimos, with the Eskimos considered somewhere between the baboons and people. Yeah, GDS was wonderful-- that's why so many of the black boys left, why the school harassed Hugh about being on drugs (which he wasn't) and told my parents I might be anorexic (nope) while ignoring all real problems. Some schools seem to have a sweeter culture than others; GDS, for all its self-congratulatory liberal platitudes, had a meaner atmosphere than Shepherd by a lot. I talked back sometimes, when I could think of something smartass to say; Hugh fought back w/strength and swear words, and good for him; when confrontations with authority were forced, I tried to slither away with lies and obfuscation, but other times I'd go out looking for trouble from phys.ed. or music teachers. Got kicked out of a lot of classes, wore all black, had the goddamn guidance counselor on my back all the time with her radioactive-orange lipstick.



The erowers & overwriting create the kid code:

**derision.** I entered hi-skool with a bad attitude. Once, I'd sung "Glory, glory hallelujah, teacher hit me with a ruler/So I met her in the attic with a semiautomatic and she ain't my teacher no more" at the top of my lungs. Now, I sat in the back of the class writing pornography. ("I'm glad to see you taking such detailed notes!") I conspired with other punk kids. I had long and discouraging talks with administrators, who said Picklejar #-1 was homophobic (huh?? we were the only out queer kids in the school) and we couldn't start a queer-straight alliance because "high school students shouldn't have to deal with it." (Reconcile those motherfuckers, baybee.) We spread propaganda for Food Not Bombs & Positive Force & Riot Grrrl (and my current problems with those 3 would take another article but at the time they were fucking mindblowing), and supported each other in the face of institutionalized insecurity. A lot of this stuff did not work. I had an English teacher who was racist (made the only black kid in the class read all the speeches in dialect from Their Eyes Were Watching God, among other things) and controlling and an asshole. (For

more see Picklejar #23.) I talked to him like 400x; he interrupted me in the middle of saying he interrupted kids too much. Eventually I decided that ignoring him was the only useful course. He's still teaching, though he abused his power and had no respect for his students. All we could do was remind each other that he was fucked up, not us. My ex-girlfriend kept telling me to go to the administration about him. Maybe we should have. I just couldn't deal with the thought of all the hassles they'd give us & the 99% certainty that nothing would come of it except our frayed nerves and more troublemaker citations in our permanent records, you know?

No issue is more fraught with desperation for  
them than school



So I want to write about kidpower, about resistance, about writing on walls and writing in zines, communicating with like-minded young opossums, protesting the KKK and the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal and Disney's America, cleaning up the Anacostia River and calling people on it when they make fucked-up jokes about fat people or "hicks" or whatever, taking naughty pictures and kissing in the bathrooms. We did all that stuff & it rules, y'all. But things are more complicated than that and I do not have the answers. Most kids I know swing back and forth between concerted efforts to Change Things and just trying to make it through the year. That's for sure what I do. I fight when I have to & when I think I can, but I still see danger in confrontation where really it does not exist. Not so different now from in first grade. We all still fuck each other over, often in societally-promoted ways, just like then. We still reel & writhe 'cause we can't see any other way out. In the end I think the underground conspiracy, the Imaginary Kid Army, the hidden tripwire network of zines & records, is the thing that has helped <sup>me</sup> more than any aboveground political action or whatever.

All the revolooshunary stuff we have done may not have created an~~ark~~arkissed heaven but it was damn fun.



Butler has his own stories. When he was 10 years old, he pedaled his Schwinn into an all-white neighborhood. A police car pulled alongside him, and the white cop inside asked Butler whether the bike belonged to him. Butler replied that it did. And as he sped away, he shot off his mouth. He asked the cop whether his car belonged to him.

Butler expected his mother to be proud of him, proud that he'd stood up for himself in the face of white authority. Instead, she was furious. Didn't he know what happened to black boys who talked to the police like that?

## **this southern city**

(This is not autobiography & not 100% fiction either.)

I'm returning now to my girlhood accent. It's thick heat, curling kudzu and trumpeter vine, potholed streets so cracked and rutted the asphalt buckles and disintegrates into gravel. Trees with telephone lines strung through them, branches chopped off, leaving stumps and upcurving survivor limbs like wings. Honeysuckle, dark purple berries, shouts down the street on Friday nights and then, sometimes, the cracking of a gun.

A lot of stories I tell, like the one about the guns, get me strange looks in quiet living rooms far from my city. I had, I think, a very ordinary Southern-city girlhood, all Good Humor trucks and riots a mile down the street from my house and coloring books of African names A to Z from the Motherland Bookstore. But I was well-taught at home, and later at school, and later still in the homes of kind girls from Northern towns, to thin my voice and strip off the swearing. Now it's coming back. I sit up nights and think about the things I never did and the things I never understood.

Goddamn.

I can't concentrate in class. I never could. Report cards said *distraction*, *potential*, like the tarot cards I read during lunch in junior high. I see other things, like I've got a Viewfinder taped to the onionskin outside layer of my eyes, and at the slightest touch of the button the picture clicks and changes.

I knew this girl.

She lived on a street of brick houses covered in ivy, up by school. I don't remember her before third grade so I guess she moved in. Her name was Lianne, her mother's name was Michiko, her father's name was Tom. We didn't hang out together at school really. I can't remember what we talked about; not boys, or bands, or teachers, or summer camps or aunts or any of the things I talked about with my other friends. We didn't sling sophisticated terms like first and second base, or tell dumb jokes about Kotex and nuns,



or make plots for how to get revenge on boys who'd insulted us. I didn't show her the games I made up, with pages of characters' names; we never pretended that we were criminals posing as art teachers, and that the laundry detergent in my dank basement was powdered cocaine. All I can remember is she wore cashmere sweaters, pastel colors. She had stationery. Her straight black hair swirled around her head like she was in a TV ad. She had two big windows with gauzy curtains and tendrils of ivy waving just outside. She was always calm, when I could never control my temper.

We only talked to each other really at her house. We watched "Magnum, P.I." there, dug through her basement box of costumes for pale blue tutus and Freddie Krueger horror hands, crushed berries from the vines and bushes that grew in the alleys and tried to paint with them. We made Kool-Aid and read kids' magazines. At her house we ate sweet bean curd out of the plastic wrapper, and sucked

on hard sour candy from Japan.

On the way to my house almost always we would start playing our game.

I was her apprentice. She was the arrogant one who knew the trade already and could treat me however she wanted. On the way to my house I would walk behind her, and she would stick her butt out and purse her lips and blow raspberries to make it like she was farting. I walked behind her, pretending to smell the farts. At my house there was nobody there after school. We went in by the back door, with the rip in the screen from the burglary, and climbed the stairs up to my room. She would pretend to teach me how to work, and then she'd get angry and punish me, calling me stupid and lazy. I showed her one day the punishment I'd worked out, the best one, that I'd been doing alone-- my old security blanket stuffed into my underpants, me lying on the floor with the stubbly carpet the color of dried blood scratching my cheek, chin, knuckles and knees raw, rubbing the wadded-up blanket. We played that I had to do that in the town square, with the whole village watching and throwing rotten vegetables and things they scooped out of the gutter. That was mostly the whole game.

After third grade I stopped hanging out with her. I forget why. A little later she moved away. I think of what we never did, like kiss, confess, gossip, explore each other's bodies, see what we were touching hard enough to bruise. She never entered the secret city of my mind or the southern cities below the waistband of my skirt; I never saw the naked skin under those cashmere sweaters and ironed slacks, the mouth open to howl after all those calm, controlled smiles. There are things that I could not tell her then, things I had no words for. The scratching of dirt and pine needles in my underpants as I sat at the dinner table, squirming, wondering how I could clean myself without my mother noticing the dirt. The sickening fear, like falling, for hours, wondering, *Am I a monster? Am I crazy?* The way I missed her only out of curiosity and guilt, wanting to see what I'd done to her. The way silence closes my throat like a scar, still, sometimes. The things I still want and have not yet gotten, from girls who know a little more than we did then. I think I had a very ordinary Southern-city girlhood. It's hard to concentrate when I think about her; words stop and I remember just the curve and color of her tan cheek. Remembering her makes me think about cities where I have never been.

I had a dream last night that I was a bird, speeding across the sky with wind scraping at my eyes and wings, holding something small and hot and pulsing clutched between my bloody claws. In the dream I was trying to remember something important, and my stomach felt like I was falling even though I was flying. In the dream I couldn't remember if the heart was mine or hers. I couldn't remember if I was supposed to eat it or save it or let it go. But I woke up with my hands in fists and my fingernails gouging crescents in the palms, and I was not afraid.

\* \* \* \* \*

end of story.

interpretation: the art of getting a  
story interestingly wrong. ↓

I read a book on childhood sexual abuse in which the editor talks about being the Slave in a game where another girl was the King: sexual, manipulative, and experienced by this woman as abuse. I don't doubt her about that at all. But I was the apprentice in my games with let's-call-her-Lisanne, and though it was sexual & manipulative & distorted by a thick static of silence, I was for sure not abused. A lot of it was my idea. And I don't know how she felt or feels about it. She always seemed so cool and in control. There's so much I still don't know. I wish, actually, sort of, that there'd been more, maybe kissing her shoes in the girls' room at school, scared that somebody would find us. No words can explain our actions, or the years I spent staring at the ceiling of my room, splitting my mind just to get as far away as possible from the out-of-control girl who had sexual urges and did terrible things. Sickness was a metaphor and more for a masochistic girl with multiple birth defects and sticking-out ribs... which leads to... just turn the page.

*lastminute addition to inspirations list-- John Lydon.  
goddamn goddamn yeah yeah.*

q.k.a.  
Johnny  
Rotten

By 11 years of age, Pretty was tall and strong. She had a stormy look on her face. Her brother Toughie was clever, quick, and careful. He didn't fight and didn't tip his hand. He was the only one who didn't yell at Pretty and the only one she would listen to. Look at them standing there at 11 and 12: Toughie, with his knack for numbers and artful silence; Pretty, a powerful girl who can run like a deer.



## **memoirs & confessions of a justified ex-crazy girl**

I became a spy, or a crazy girl, my ticket out of myself. My three personalities developed slowly from an overactive imagination, ten books a week from the library, and a knife-sharp need to be someone else. I was a feral kid from a poisonous underground country, and I trusted nobody and nobody trusted me; or I was an ambassador/exile (never quite figured out which one) from the stars, with my own language; or I was Loki, the mocker of the gods, who carried the seeds of his and their destruction within him. I believed these things completely, & saw visions that proved that they were true. They sometimes overlapped, but usually came one at a time. Besides making me feel special and

giving me a hiding place, these personalities were fiercer and spikier than I was. They could be resistance in disguise. I remember an argument with my horrible English teacher in 7th grade, in which she scolded me for being antisocial and cynical. I was not really present, but Loki snapped out, "Of course I am-- look at the people around me!" Sometimes now I want him back. Now I get so unsure of myself, wilt so easily, stutter or stay silent when two hours later I come up with the perfect response.

I don't know how exactly I stopped fucking around with Lisanne, or how the people got out of my head. Sometime around 8th grade they packed their bags and headed for the high ground, stealing that artificial confidence and leaving me stuck with just myself.

(this of course relates to the skool stuff + the lisanne stuff-- connect the dots...)

So now the main problem in my head is not extra tenants but depression-- rotting building instead of rats, if you wanna talk all metaphorical. Broken flooring. I write stuff (like this zine) and then spend 6 hours thinking about how much it sucks. I read once that depression=anger turned inward. Sometimes it works the other way too-- my explosions of temper when I was a kid were entangled w/depression-- the same frustration, the same loss of control. (Control being a theme in my life. Gimme some way to get out of my skin, out of my skull baby, for just a little while can't you? I want crazy w/o consequences, at least sometimes, & it seems just out of reach.)

come live with me and be my love...

He has taken all the old gestures of I-don't-trust-you to the next level: ritual, password, a silent question and an open secret. It's in the way he blinks when he talks, never looking at you (whoever you are), twisting something between his fingers. Snapping and unsnapping the same orange plastic barrette, over & over. It's in the stare and the crooked smile, the way he shoves himself back in the seat and the way he scrunches up against any window for the chance to look out on something better, somewhere he's not. He has all the skills of deceit and evasion learned in thirteen years of schooling. His glance flicks away as soon as he starts to speak.

And while his conversation arches off into the realms of the quasi-religious and the bullshit-fantastical-allegorical-comedic, with occasional unstable landings on planet earth ("It's Mother's Day"), I'm just wondering what he's doing tonight. The Word was made flesh; and the word was, GO!

"Kids lib is like liquor: sometimes it's the only thing that gets me through the day."  
-Rufián Ojonegro, age 17, Sanctafelonia, S.C.

the kids' lib guerrillas move like kudzu, slow & under cover of darkness. one kid senses an extra-high reading on the bullshit detector, and starts thinking and writing in a different idiom, a tongue that steals from everybody. a kid turns to fantasy (lie) to survive another day because it's impossible then to think of



any other option; the feeling is that nothing can change, or you don't know how. so for the moment, close your eyes in the back of the classroom, or slip into the copy room and print up a zine, or under the banner of a school-sponsored function spread the truth about the relationships, compromises and techniques of power in relation to lack of power.

the kids' lib guerrillas move like lightning. a hand crumples a piece of paper loudly on a desk and a low fake-confident voice slurs, "I'm not playing along with this no more." in the corner of the playground a group of kids figures out that if nobody does it (plays football, comes to class, stays silent when the phys.ed. teacher rubs their ass) then nobody has to. there's a student strike in california, a protest at the capitol building by kids & teachers & parents from schools without working toilets. choose your own adventure.

And what do these "kids" have to say about adults who want to join their fun?

"If you can fight better at 21 than you ever could at age 8, there's hope. Otherwise..."

-Salome Skvedkov, age 14, Washington, D.C.

the kids' lib guerrillas take every weapon they get a hold of. yeah a smart mouth works. mistrust, obscenity, laughter, fashion, sex, fantasy or a swift fist when necessary. two things they know: no one is separate from what they hate, and everything is connected. "while there is a soul in prison, I am not free" - eugene v. debs. words aren't actions but they can help sometimes if only to keep you going or keep you sane. there is a purpose in lying, even lying to yourself, if you see no other options. ("the use of fakeness as a strategy" mixed with the knowledge that only action in real life = real change = real fun, shaken not stirred... thank you, hugh.)

The first girl I kissed tasted like cigarettes and smelled like shampoo. She'd gone out with her best friend before, a beautiful and mean mean boy I'd sweated madly, the Ashkenazic Oscar Wilde with a streak of mockery a mile wide. She could do tricks with matches, though they usually unintentionally set the whole book on fire, singeing her fingertips black. The summer I was fifteen, when the heat pressed sweaty palms down on the city, I travelled all around D.C. I hit subway stops I'd never seen before and took buses I'd never heard of. The old women on the buses leaned back against the red vinyl seat backs, shifted their legs beneath bright red and orange skirts, laughed and flirted lazily with the bus drivers, and fanned themselves with folded newspapers. The heat unmoored conversations; the driver would say something, and a minute later the lady would laugh. When I closed my eyes I saw the gliding colored lines of the subway maps.

In my room that summer, with the window open to the noise-filled night, I bargained for kisses. "Just three more! Just as long as it's light!" When she talked I heard more than she told me. She said that when she was thirteen she had grabbed her older brother, shoved him over the railing at the top of the stairs, and dangled him by his feet over the fall to the first floor. All the blood had rushed to his head but he didn't cry or say anything, just hung still, his breath loud in the silence of the stairwell. She pulled him up, hearing his head and skinny body bang against the rail. His silence scared her so much that she clenched his ankles until they turned red. He was two years older than her, but she always won their fights, she said casually. She hit a strike-anywhere match against her shoe and lit a cigarette, leaning against my window screen. An insect rattled the mesh. I moved toward her, quiet and desperate, and opened my hands. She took me by the wrists.

*The mouth becomes a strange and complicated flower or the whole*

## **the antivirtue dissertation**

As I rode the Red Line train to Silver Spring over the elevated tracks, my mind skidded back and forth from clouded and muggy with alcohol and up-all-night to bright clarity that I almost never know when I'm well-rested and sober. The graffiti along the railroad tracks blurred, then became startlingly sharp and beautiful as if I'd focused a camera inside my skull. Then, I wasn't thinking of much except what a weird night I'd had, and what gossip people would be saying about me the next day, and whether or not my parents would notice I'd been drinking (nope! heh). Only later did it become another example, in certain conversations, of my impurity & impiety.

*face, crossed by a vertical design*

*Old women, of S's, is divided into geometric sectors.*

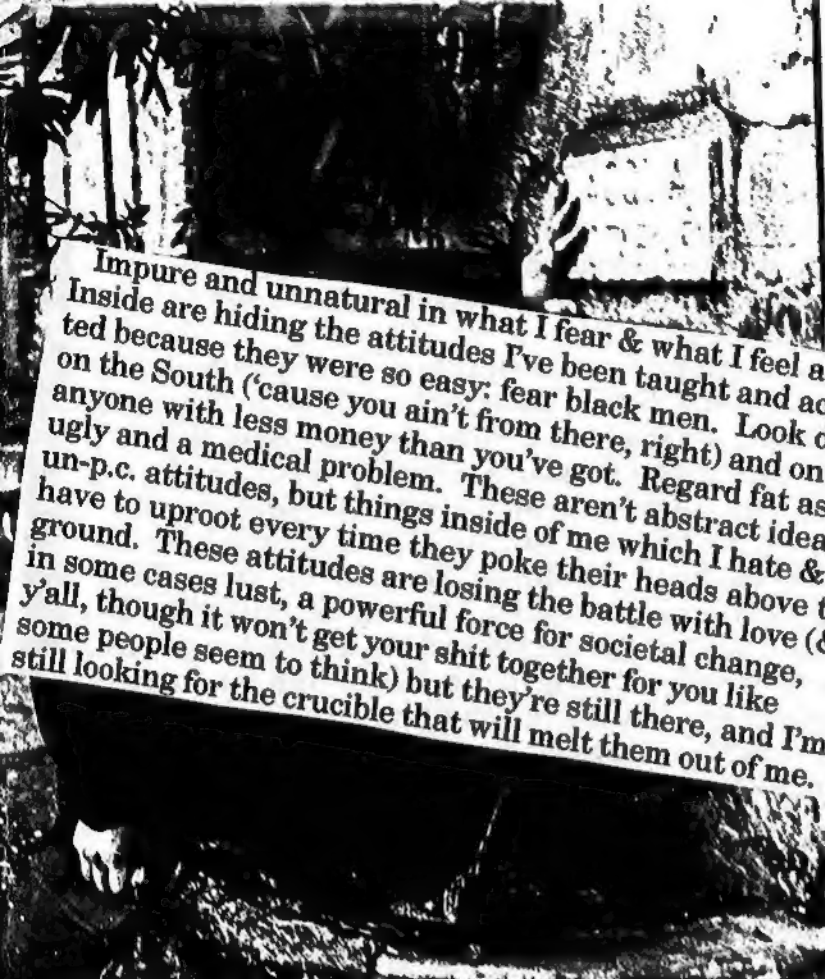
*extraordinary virtuosos,*

*invent designs so free that they*

Because I am impure, for sure. I love the least natural food there is-- 99¢ Swiss cake rolls, McD's french fries. I got drunk for the first time & really dug it. My sexuality isn't nice, normal, or easy to explain. (But come over sometime if you're interested and I'll give you the lowdown, cutiepie...) I'm a meat-lovin' vegetarian, & 2 months ago I ate my first shrimp in 7 years. (They were just gonna be thrown out, and I didn't pay for them! Otherwise I wouldn't've done it, no joke...) A wimpish "how can I do this?" voice argued with a bloodthirsty voice coming right from the taste buds-- "Isn't there any more??" I won't trade some extra feelings of safety for the thrill of striding through the city late at night in a short skirt and fishnets. Or wash the mascara and glitter off my face because some feminist girls are still struggling with their "anticonsumerist antipatriarchal" mentality in which makeup is only o.k. if they can assure themselves that it's really a symbol of female power. (Instead of for Jesus's sake just makeup, adornment, sexual attractor if yer lucky, you know what I'm saying?) "Carefree carefree what do you think's best/Hostility or honesty & improperly dressed" -the Slits

*almost ignore the features of the human face.*

bless me punkrock 4 I have sinned.



Impure and unnatural in what I fear & what I feel also. Inside are hiding the attitudes I've been taught and accepted because they were so easy: fear black men. Look down on the South ('cause you ain't from there, right) and on anyone with less money than you've got. Regard fat as ugly and a medical problem. These aren't abstract ideas of un-p.c. attitudes, but things inside of me which I hate & have to uproot every time they poke their heads above the ground. These attitudes are losing the battle with love (& in some cases lust, a powerful force for societal change, y'all, though it won't get your shit together for you like some people seem to think) but they're still there, and I'm still looking for the crucible that will melt them out of me.

Ambivalence. Trying to create a better world (pardon my language, hope there are no ladies in the audience) and also really fuckin' hating a lot of liberal abstractions that seem to have no connection to the flesh and blood. Wanting to be liked & ending up pissing everyone else off because I decide I can't stand 'em. Finding everything I hate under my skin. Finding everything I love classified as unhealthy/unpunk/antifeminist, and everything I care about filed under U for Unimportant. Only holding onto the impure stuff I love (the stuff in the first two paragraphs, ya know) can bring me to that unnatural clarity I get sometimes after drinking or gossiping or getting off.

using love to create anarchy

eat/talk/fuck/gXXXXX

## **i.d.lilah**

Coughing, shivering, drinking caffeine and raking a cold hand through her hair, I.D. lilah is waiting for her exile from the sun to end. She's torn between faster than a bullet and lower than dirt, quick to sense her audience and their titillation and their misreadings of her badly-typed-out code. She goes to the window and peers up and down the street looking for your car.

She tells you right from the start how it's gonna be, warns you that she doesn't trust anybody and ain't nobody who trusts her, not more than once anyway. She slinks down the street trying to sashay, allegory of spite and suspicion, yeah, cracking mean jokes and hissing in your ear whenever you take her out. All of your friends hate her. She's not too fond of them either. She tells the story of the house down her street, the parties she'd hear with shouts of laughter cutting through the air and then, sometimes, "You bitch-- motherfucker--" bang, bang, bang. And later as she was shifting in and out of sleep she'd hear the ambulance wail. She tells this story and watches closely to see if anyone draws back or gives that nervous laugh. A smile jerks up on her face, crooked, like it's being raised on hooks. She's only friendly when she's drunk.

She keeps a second skin hidden in her wallet, so in times of emergency she can slip it on and spread out into a snake with a body thicker than both of her wrists held together. Then she slithers out the door when no one's looking, escaping from the scene of her latest betrayal. But still she's trapped in her dark red scaly skin, her scars, her ribs and her dogged depression. In any lawful court she'd be guilty as charged, whatever the charges were.

Your car pulls up, hits the curb, draws back. You slam the door and knock a loose bit of the window siding into the street. You pick it up and walk to her door. She steps out with you; there's a conversation spiced with "yeah" and "like, ah," and a yelp "yow--ooh!" when you pinch her ass. She was so glad when she found out you were a vampire because it relieved her from that clawing guilt that she'd take everything from you and give nothing back; and besides, she likes getting bitten better than getting kissed. Without you she doesn't think she'd have a chance. You're still trying to figure out who the fuck she thinks she is. "So am I, baybee, doncha know..."



so that was the femme skunk. it's for all the smelly young apostles of sensual appetyte, all the sweet-tart spies in the house of love, all the kids hiding anxious in their skeletons, all the uncertain weasels who speak too soon and act stupid out of spite & force of habit. it's because i want you on my side. it's because i'm still "seeking pleasure on the battlefield," and it's difficult fun.

kisses...eveeta

do you believe in the porcupine possibilities of pleasure, babe?

heart means so much to me... and by the way can I borrow 55¢ cents??

Yr. cheatin'



the femme skunk  
p.o. box 9785  
Washington, D.C. 20016

please send me to:



I LOVE SKUNKS.